What Could Have Been

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by Zetaglobin

Summary

A month of imprisonment has given Satsuki a lot of time to reflect on the little sister she never had.

Notes

Based on events up to episode 19

Matoi's posture always bothered you. The constant slump of her shoulders pushed her spine down at a curved angle, making her look perpetually irritated with her surroundings. Though you supposed that might not be far from the truth. You could not recall a moment in your life that you ever slouched; your back remained upright, shoulders pushed forward, head held high, regardless of whom you were addressing. *Keep yourself poised and elegant my dear. If you want those pigs in human clothing to listen you must command a certain presence. Unless you want to be devoured alive.*

Your mother's words echo in the back of your mind, sending a cold chill through your suspended limbs. You tense your muscles, feeling the steel cuffs dig into your wrists; a reminder that you're trapped but alive. Once the pain begins to recede you allow yourself to relax again, the chains clinking softly as you let your body dangle freely. And you think about her again.

You feel foolish for not noticing it before. Although her hair has been dyed and haphazardly cut short, you share the same jet black color. When your eyes locked in battle, you'd always been met with an identical shade of blue, burning furiously right back at you. However your similarities did not stretch much farther than that.

Her speech was littered with profanity and informality, surely words she had picked up during her life as a street rat. She fought recklessly, improvising strategies in the midst of combat, while you spent years honing every stroke of your sword. You recall the day she challenged you, craning her head to look up at you, and raising her blade in the ultimate show of defiance. Although she was hundreds of feet below the pedestal you stood upon, she managed to hold your gaze. She was stubbornly determined.

Another soft clink of metal stirs you from your thoughts. Your breath catches in your throat as a slender hand brushes the back of your neck. Finely sharpened nails rake down your shoulders, finally pausing at the small of your back.

"You look troubled." A sickeningly sweet voice shatters the silence you had been enjoying. You don't acknowledge it.

"Poor thing...finally regretting your adorable little rebellion...?" Ragyo taunts, dipping her hand down lower. You don't even flinch. After nearly a month of torture, you've found ways to numb yourself. Focusing on a far off point in the distance, you let your thoughts drift back to Matoi.

Perhaps if you had grown up as sisters things would be different. Perhaps you wouldn't have wasted weeks warring against each other, exchanging heated threats and deadly blows. Perhaps you could have been allies. You grit your teeth, ignoring the sharp slapping sound of Ragyo's open palm against your flesh.
Matoi would've been in on the plan from the beginning. Side by side you could have ruled the academy.

"You're lucky I let you live, you ungrateful brat!" Her lips are mere inches from your ear as she hisses viciously at you.

You would've had someone to support you. You would've had someone else who saw what your mother did to you. You wouldn't have had to bury it all-

"Ahaha is that a little tear drop I see? What are you an infant?"

You stiffen as the blows grow stronger.

You imagine Matoi's face again. You're willing to bet that she finds rest peacefully. That she doesn't wake up with her limbs seizing, a cold sweat coating her body. You're nearly sure that she doesn't scream herself hoarse as she slumbers. Not like you.

"Such a weak body..." Ragyo remarks, examining the steady stream of blood dripping down your legs.

Perhaps in the end, it is better that you and Matoi grew up apart. At least one of you was able to escape.

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